

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3554
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCEUR RAFLO BONN GER
USNMR SHAPE BE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NATO 03056

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, UK
SUBJECT: TANK MAIN ARMAMENT

REF: STATE 104913 DTG 072116Z MAY 77

UK NADREP PERRY PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING CLARIFICATION
REQUESTED REFTEL:

- THE UK WILL ADOPT THE M13A 120MM TANK GUN FIRING FIXED
AMMUNITION FOR USE ON THE CHIEFTAIN SUCCESSOR IF THE US
SELECTS THE M13A FOR THE XM1.

- IF THE US DOES NOT ADOPT THE M13A, THEN THE UK WILL
CHOOSE BETWEEN THE M13A AND THE M7 120MM TANK GUN WHICH
FIRES SEPARATE LOADED AMMUNITION FOR USE ON THE CHIEFTAIN
SUCCESSOR. PERRY SAID THE CHOICE BETWEEN THE TWO WILL
DEPEND PRIMARILY ON FUTURE TANK DESIGN AND INTEROPERABIL-
ITY CONSIDERATIONS BECAUSE OF THE MINIMAL DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN M7 AND M13A PERFORMANCE.

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- AT PRESENT, THE UK DOES NOT BELIEVE THE FRG SMOOTHBORE
GUN WILL PROVE SUPERIOR TO THE UK RIFLED GUN PRIMARILY
BECAUSE THE SMOOTHBORE CANNOT FIRE BOTH SPIN AND FIN
STABILIZED AMMUNITION.

- AS TO INTEROPERABILITY BETWEEN UK GUNS, PERRY SAID THE
"SHOT" FOR THE M7 AND M13A GUNS ARE THE SAME. THE SHOT

AND CHARGE ARE "SEPARATE LOADED" IN THE M7 AND "FIXED" WHEN USED IN THE M13A. HE SAID IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO FIRE THE NEW ARMORED PIERCING FIN STABILIZED DISCARDING SABOT (APFSDS) CARTRIDGE IN ITS M7 GUN VERSION FROM THE CHIEFTAIN'S EXISTING L11 GUN, BUT WITH LIMITATIONS ON CHARGE.

- THE UK HAS NOT DECIDED WHETHER OR NOT TO REGUN CHIEFTAIN. THEY HOPE TO AVOID REGUNNING BY FIELDING AN IMPROVED APFSDS 120MM CARTRIDGE USING A DESIGN SIMILAR TO THE US XM774 CARTRIDGE. STREATOR

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